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TRIAL OF THE SPARROW FOR KILLING

COCK ROBIN

ILLUSTRATED.

19489 U'

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The Trial of the Sparrow for Killing Cock Robin.

By Robert Dilmer

"For killing Cock Robin
Shall the Sparrow be tried?"
Was a question discussed
By the birds far and wide.

At last that the Sparrow
Should be tried was agreed
By this jury of grandees—
A grand-jury indeed.

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"Who'll be the Judge?"
"I," said the Daw,
"For I'm versed in the law,
I'll be the Judge."

This is the Daw
That was versed in the law.

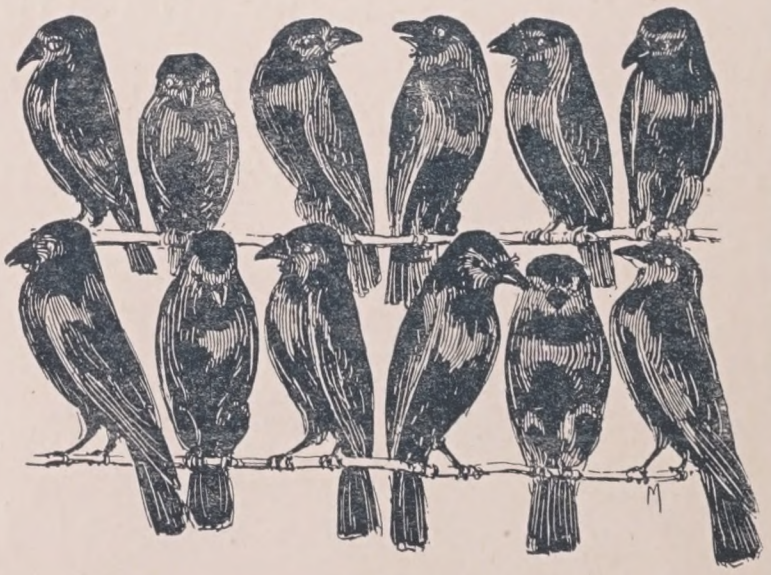
"Who'll arrest the Sparrow?"
"I," said the Quail,
"I'll catch him without fail.
I'll arrest the Sparrow."

This is the Quail
Who caught him without fail.

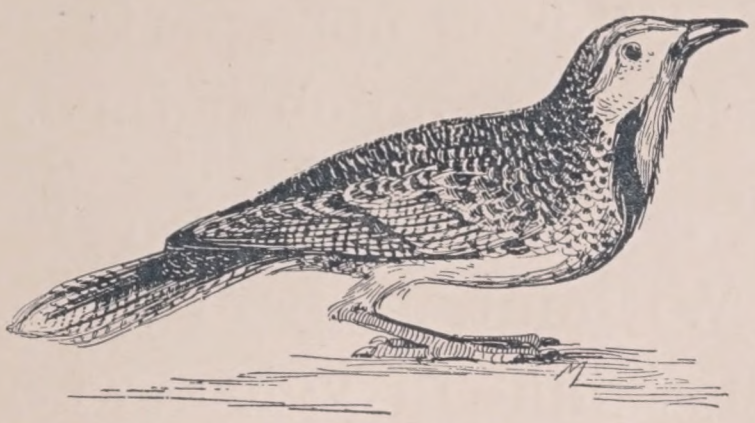
"Who'll be the Clerk?"
"I," said the Kite,
"For a good hand I write,
I'll be the Clerk."

This is the Kite
Who a good hand could write.

"Who'll be the jury?"
"Twelve of us," exclaimed
the crow,
"And every fact each one
will know,
We'll be the jury."



This is the jury,
And none any fairer
Could be called to sit
At the trial of the Sparrow.



"Who'll prosecute the case?"
"I," said the Linnet,
"For I think there's no
wrong in it,
I'll prosecute the case."

This is the Linnet
Who thought there was no
wrong in it.

"Who'll appear for the
Sparrow?"
"I," said the Jay,
"I appear in the courts
every day,
I'll appear for the Sparrow."

This is the Jay
Who appeared in the courts
every day.

The trial week at last arrived
When from the gloomy jail,
The Sparrow to the court was led
In chains by Sheriff Quail.

"Stand up!" said the Judge to the Sparrow in court,
"For killing Cock Robin you now are arraigned.
Hold up your right hand! Ah! this is not sport;
To find you thus charged the court is much pained."

"Now, what of the charge? Are you guilty or no?
And how'll you be tried?" Without palor or tears,
Said the Sparrow: "Not Guilty," and in voice sweet and low,
"I leave my fate to a jury of peers."

"Proceed," said the Court, addressing the Linnet,
Who rose and the bill of indictment read out
With scores of "saids" and "aforesaids" in it,
While the Sparrow was racked with hope and doubt.

The Linnet had each witness by
Subpœnaed for the State—
The Lark, the Cuckoo and the Fly,
To fix the Sparrow's fate.

"Who'll be the first witness?"
"I," said the Fly,
"For I saw him die,
I'll be the first witness."

This is the Fly
Who saw him die.

"Then," said the Judge,
"On the stand take your place,
And tell the Court and Jury
All you know about the case."

"Well," said the fly, "it happened when
Cock Robin married Miss Jennie Wren.
They had a feast upon that day,
Their friends had come and all was gay.
The Cuckoo came and stood about
Till Jennie Wren said: 'Put him out.'
He turned around as if he'd go.
The Sparrow then took up his bow
To shoot the Cuckoo, as he said,
But missed and shot Cock Robin dead."

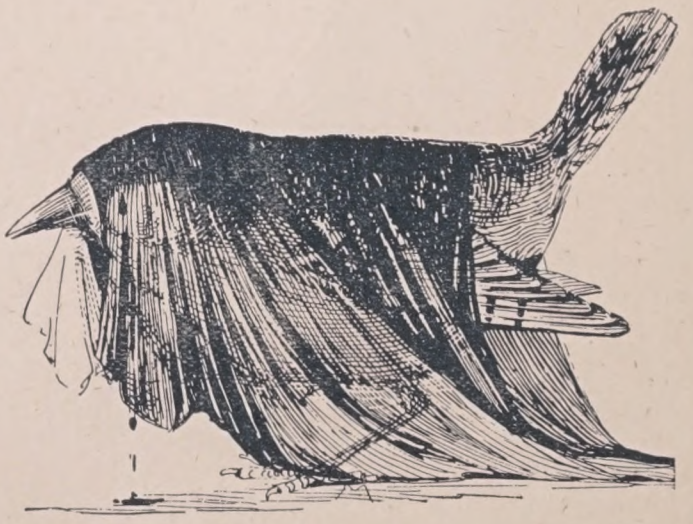
The Lark was called to testify,
And said: "One day defendant
and I
Were in the woods quite all
alone,
The Sparrow then to me did own
That at the feast, with fatal bow
He laid the said Cock Robin low."

"Who'll be witness for the
Sparrow?"
"I," said the Rook,
"I, who on the scene did look,
I'll be the witness for the
Sparrow."

This is the Rook who on the scene did look.

"The Cuckoo came, as you've been told,
With angry look and manner bold.
He moved among the guests, and when
He saw the lovely Jennie Wren
It seemed to stir his soul with ire
And fan his anger into fire.
The Cuckoo loved her once, 'twas said,
But on that day his love was dead.
He struck a blow in anger's heat
And Jennie Wren fell at his feet.
The Cuckoo then made at the Sparrow,
Who quickly seized his bow and arrow
And at the Cuckoo aimed his dart,
But missed and pierced Cock Robin's heart."

"Who'll be the next witness?"
"I," said widow Robin,
"If you will pardon me for
sobbin.'
I'll be the next witness."



This is the Widow Robin
In her long veil a sobbin.'

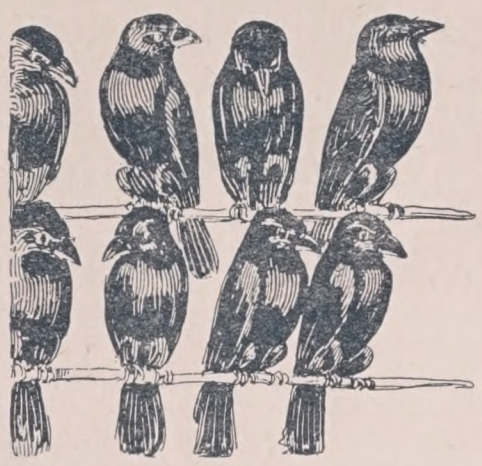
"A Grand-Jury Indeed"

"In Chains by Sheriff Quail"

Little about the case she knew,
Except that day the bold Cuckoo
Had proved himself a bitter foe,
Assaulting her with cruel blow.

"Permit us now," remarked the Linnet,
"To call the Cockoo just one minute."
The Cuckoo on the stand did say:
"I never struck the bride that day;
But all the guests when called to dine,
Quite freely drank of Currant wine,
And after rising from their meal
They joined to dance a lively reel,
And as the dancers, drunk on wine,
Moved up and down all in a line,
Against me ran the giddy bride
And to the floor fell by my side.
The Sparrow saw that this was so,
But, drunk and reckless, seized his bow.
His arrow sped close by my side,
And from this shot Cock Robin died."

Then from the bench, in manner grave,
Remarked the stern Judge Daw:
"Now to the jury put your facts,
And to the Court, your law."



"Please your Honor," began the Jay,
"And worthy jurors, I would say
That self-defense will be our plea,
And short and clear my speech shall be.
His bow the Sparrow never drew
Until attacked by the Cuckoo.

He saw the blow to Jennie Wren,
And was it not in reason then
The Sparrow should at once suppose
That he might fall by Cuckoo's blows,
Unless he did, to end the strife,
Strike in defense of his own life?
The Sparrow's act was lawful then,
And will this jury, honest men,
Say, 'guilty,' when the Sparrow's doom
Will be from gallows to the tomb?
Jurors, be kind, and hear me through;
He struck for life and woman too!
Both dear to hearts of knightly men.
Then set my client free again."

Then from his seat rose Lawyer Linnet
To gain his case, if speech could win it.
Said he, "The Sparrow tried to show
That Cuckoo gave the bride a blow.
The Rook, I think, mistook the fact
That Jennie Wren, by Cuckoo's act,
Fell to the floor. The fact is this:
The bride was drunk on wine and bliss;

And other guests had tried the wine,
If boisterous conduct is a sign.
And when the bride could drink no more
She fell by Cuckoo to the floor.
What right had then that hasty Sparrow
To bring so soon his bow and arrow
And shoot a dart in crowded hall
Midst splendid guests at wedding ball?
His act, felonious in its kind,
Then 'guilty' must this jury find."

The Jury then was charged the law,
In words as follows, by Judge Daw:
"Jurors, the Sparrow admits the fact
Cock Robin's death was by his act.
This so, the law says murder's done.
And if the Sparrow guilt would shun,
He must by plea and witness too
His innocence make clear to you.
If you believe it was the fact
The Sparrow, from the Cuckoo's act,
Had every reason to suppose
The Cuckoo sought his life with blows,
And if the Sparrow aimed with care
At Cuckoo and killed Robin there,
'Not guilty' let your verdict be.
But from the proof if you shall see
The Cuckoo turned as if he'd go,
And Sparrow then took up his bow
And shot like one in careless spree,
Then 'guilty' let your verdict be.
The Court now leaves the case with you;
Acquit yourselves like jurors true."

To Court the Jury soon returned,
And every heart with feeling burned.
The Clerk then asked: "Have you agreed?"
The Jury said: "We have, indeed."
Then said the Clerk: "How do you find?"
And every Juror spoke his mind.
The silence then which reigned in Court
And through the spacious hall,
Was broken when the foreman
Said: "Not Guilty! say we all."

Then the birds of the air
In a chorus of glee,
Cried: "The verdict is fair,
And the Sparrow is free!"

MORAL BY THE DOVE.

Beware of wine and wedding balls,
Of deadly bows in crowded halls,
Of tippling brides and knightly birds
Of angry passions, hasty words;
And you'll escape the gloomy jail
And iron grasp of Sheriff Quail.
A Sparrow, once arraigned in court,
May deem the case a thing of sport,
But he will see, in better mind,
That every trial leaves behind
A serpent's trail—a silent thrust—
Which injures most the true and just.

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